

In the Claims:

Please add the following new claims 13 to 27 and cancel claims 1 to 12 without prejudice:

Claims 1 to 12.(canceled)

13.(new) An agent for dyeing hair, said agent having a pH of 4 to 11 and containing at least one vat dye that is reduced by a reducing agent compound, said reducing agent compound forming an enediol in an alkaline medium.

14.(new) The agent as defined in claim 13, wherein the reducing agent compound is selected from the group consisting of monohydroxyacetone, dihydroxyacetone, acetoin, glutaroin, adipoin, glycol aldehyde, benzoin, 2,3-dihydroxyacrylaldehyde, and cyclopentadiolone.

15.(new) The agent as defined in claim 13, further comprising the reducing agent compound in an equimolar amount in relation to the at least one vat dye or in an up to 50-fold excess in relation to the at least one vat dye.

16.(new) The agent as defined in claim 13, wherein said at least one vat dye is selected from the group consisting of Vat Yellow 1, C.I. Vat Yellow 2, C.I. Vat Yellow 3, C.I. Vat Yellow 4, C.I. Vat Yellow 12, C.I. Vat Yellow 13, C.I. Vat Yellow 17, C.I. Vat Yellow 20, C.I. Vat Yellow 26, C.I. Vat Yellow 28, C.I. Vat Yellow 33,

C.I. Vat Yellow 46, C.I. Vat Orange 1, C.I. Vat Orange 2, C.I. Vat Orange 3, C.I. Vat Orange 7, C.I. Vat Orange 9, C.I. Vat Orange 11, C.I. Vat Orange 15, C.I. Vat Orange 17, C.I. Vat Orange 19, C.I. Vat Red 10, C.I. Vat Red 13, C.I. Vat Red 14, C.I. Vat Red 15, C.I. Vat Red 18, C.I. Vat Red 23, C.I. Vat Red 28, C.I. Vat Red 32, C.I. Vat Red 35, C.I. Vat Violet 1, C.I. Vat Violet 10, C.I. Vat Violet 15, C.I. Vat Violet 16, C.I. Vat Blue 4, C.I. Vat Blue 6, C.I. Vat Blue 20, C.I. Vat Blue 21, C.I. Vat Blue 25, C.I. Vat Blue 26, C.I. Vat 29, C.I. Vat Blue 30, C.I. Vat Blue 43, C.I. Vat Blue 64, C.I. Vat Blue 66, C.I. Vat Green 1, C.I. Vat Green 3, C.I. Vat Green 9, C.I. Vat Green 11, C.I. Vat Green 12, C.I. Vat Brown 1, C.I. Vat Brown 3, C.I. Vat Brown 45, C.I. Vat Black 16, C.I. Vat Black 25, C.I. Vat Black 27, C.I. Vat Black 29, and mixtures thereof.

17.(new) The agent as defined in claim 13, containing from 0.01 to 10 weight percent of said at least one vat dye.

18.(new) The agent as defined in claim 13, further comprising a cationic compound.

19.(new) The agent as defined in claim 18, wherein said cationic compound is selected from the group consisting of Polyquaternium-2, Polyquaternium-4, Polyquaternium-5, Polyquaternium-6, Polyquaternium-7, Polyquaternium-10, Polyquaternium-11, Polyquaternium-15, Polyquaternium-16, Polyquaternium-17, Polyquaternium-18, Polyquaternium-19, Polyquaternium-20, Polyquaternium-22, Polyquaternium-24, Polyquaternium-27, Polyquaternium-28, Polyquaternium-29,

Polyquaternium-31, Polyquaternium-35, Polyquaternium-36, Polyquaternium-37, Polyquaternium-39, Polyquaternium-44, Polyquaternium-46, Polyquaternium-47, Polyquaternium-51, Polyquaternium-55, Polyquaternium-57, Quaternium-80, hydroxypropylguarhydroxypropyltrimethylammonium chloride, guar-hydroxypropyltrimethylammonium chloride, and mixtures thereof.

20.(new) The agent as defined in claim 18, containing from 0.001 to 5 weight percent of said cationic compound.

21.(new) The agent as defined in claim 13, further comprising at least one developer compound and at least one coupler compound.

22.(new) The agent as defined in claim 13, further comprising at least one self-coupling compound.

23.(new) The agent as defined in claim 13, further comprising at least one natural or synthetic direct dye.

24.(new) A method of dyeing hair, said method comprising the steps of:

a) pre-reducing at least one vat dye with a reducing agent compound to form at least one reduced vat dye, said reducing agent compound having an enediol form in a strongly alkaline medium having a pH of from 10 to 13;

b) providing an agent for dyeing the hair having a pH of from 4 to 11 and containing said at least one reduced vat dye; and

c) applying the agent for dyeing the hair to the hair.

25.(new) The method as defined in claim 24, further comprising allowing the agent applied during the applying to act on the hair at 15 to 60°C for a treatment time of 1 to 60 minutes and then re-oxidizing the at least one reduced vat dye with atmospheric oxygen or with an oxidant to form an insoluble pigment.

26.(new) The method as defined in claim 25, wherein the oxidant is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen peroxide; addition compounds of hydrogen peroxide with urea, melamine, and sodium borate; persulfates; and mixtures thereof.

27.(new) The method as defined in claim 25, further comprising protecting said at least one reduced vat dye from atmospheric oxygen during the allowing of the agent to act on the hair by covering the hair with a plastic cap.